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DE RUEHFR #1692/01 1170516
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
P 270516Z APR 07
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6794
INFO RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 0503
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAWJA/DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMCSUU/FBI WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/26/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: (S) TERRORIST ABDALLAH IN THE HOSPITAL; SIGNS GOOD
FOR CONTINUED INCARCERATION

REF: A. STATE 29445

[1](#)B. PARIS 775

Classified By: POLITICAL MINISTER COUNSELOR JOSIAH ROSENBLATT FOR REASON 1.4 (B) AND (D)

[1](#)1. (S) SUMMARY: Convicted terrorist and political assassin, Georges Ibrahim Abdallah, remains in prison. His parole request is not likely to be decided until June 2007. The Ministry of Justice has assured the Ambassador that it opposes parole. Abdallah's worsening health, however, could potentially move a judge to leniency. This cable reports latest developments in the case and summarizes the U.S. Embassy's actions in connection with the case since we were first contacted on February 27. END SUMMARY

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ABDALLAH CASE

[1](#)2. (C) Convicted terrorist and political assassin, Georges Ibrahim Abdallah, is reportedly in a Toulouse, France area hospital being treated for an unspecified illness. This is the second time in the past 18 months that Abdallah has been hospitalized.

[1](#)3. (S) Ambassador Stapleton received a letter on April 2 from Jean-Marie Beney, Chief of Staff to the Minister of Justice, advising us that the GOF's chief prosecutor (known in French as the Procureur General) had been given instructions to adamantly oppose Abdallah's request for parole. The Ambassador responded in writing on April 26 with gratitude and asked that the Minister of Justice advise his successor of the importance of the case; the Embassy will try to seek the same commitment from the incoming administration. While the final decision will be made by an independent judiciary, the government's support is vital to our case, particularly since the GOF can appeal if Abdallah is granted parole in the first hearing.

[1](#)4. (S//NF) Separately, the GOF's DST (Direction de la surveillance du territoire, our FBI-equivalent) told us it had made the following recommendation to the judge responsible for hearing the case: "In the current already-tense political environment, Abdallah would be one more destabilizing element on the Lebanese scene. Our service assesses that Abdallah's release would present a danger to the security of our country and to all those openly engaged in the war on terrorism. The DST therefore recommended that Abdallah not be released on parole." (Note: We understand that Abdallah is most likely to return to Lebanon if he is released. It is believed that many of his former associates are living there. Two of his brothers are

among the family members to whom he intends to return; DST knows that at least one of them is a former terrorist. END NOTE)

15. (S) The Embassy's lawyer in the case (the U.S. government is a civil party in the hearing), Georges Kiejman, told us on April 23 that he believes that the court's slow pace in the hearing is a positive sign. Overall he judges that Abdallah is likely to be denied parole given current circumstances, but that Abdallah's worsening health could play in his favor if the court believes he should be released for humanitarian reasons. Kiejman said that the judge will hear from Abdallah in a videoconference now scheduled for early June; Kiejman will be invited to attend.

16. (S) COMMENT: Embassy Paris is convinced that the GOF has fully supports our position. We will need to secure the same commitment from the incoming government, since the case is not likely to be heard until early June 2007. Whatever the new government, we do not anticipate any significant change in the GOF's position. END COMMENT

BACKGROUND

17. (U) Georges Ibrahim Abdallah was sentenced on February 28, 1987 to life in prison for the 1982 assassination of COL Charles Ray, U.S. Army Attach, Embassy Paris, the 1982 assassination of Yaacov Barsimantov, an Israeli diplomat, and the 1984 attempted assassination of U.S. Consul General Strasbourg, Robert Homme. He was the presumed head of FARL, an armed Lebanese faction which may have carried out a number of other attacks, including several assassinations (or attempts) against U.S. and Israeli government personnel. Most of his associates remain at large.
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18. (U) Abdallah has requested parole on several occasions since he became eligible on October 27, 1999. His parole was rejected on November 19, 2001, July 4, 2003, and on November 19, 2003. Abdallah's most recent request for parole was denied on January 31, 2006, based mostly on his lack of a sufficient plan for reintegration into society, a lack of demonstrated remorse, and for not having abandoned his extremist beliefs. The 2006 denial followed a 2005 decision by a lower regional court to grant parole. The GOF won the case on appeal.

19. (U) Since May 1, 2006 the processing of conditional release in terrorism cases has been centralized in the Paris Tribunal. All appeals are now heard by the Paris Court of Appeals.

110. (U) Abdallah requested conditional release again in February 2007. The case will be heard by a Judge from the Paris Tribunal called "Juge de l'application des peines" or a sentencing judge. Whatever the decision in the first instance, the judgment can be appealed by either party. The Paris Court of Appeals (3 judges vice one) would then render its decision.

111. (SBU) On February 27 we were contacted by, and subsequently the Ambassador received a letter from Georges Kiejman, who was legal counsel for the USG. (as a civil party) during the 1987 prosecution of Abdallah. Kiejman forwarded a separate letter from the Paris Tribunal which indicated that Abdallah had requested conditional release. The letter also stated that the civil parties to the case, the U.S. Ambassador to Paris, Mrs. Sharon Ray, her children, and Robert Homme, could, if they so wished, present their commentary to the court no later than March 9 (in accordance with Chapter II, Section IV, Article 712-16 of the Penal Code). The Embassy also understands that in addition to observations made through correspondence from the civil parties, Chapter II, Section II, Article 712-7 of the Penal Code states that the attorney representing the civil parties,

but not the parties themselves, has a right to be present at any related hearing.

U.S. EMBASSY/ U.S. GOVERNMENT ACTIONS

¶12. (C) On February 27 a U.S. Embassy officer met with lawyer Georges Kiejman to take delivery of the letter addressed to the Ambassador and apprised of the salient facts of the case.

On February 28, Embassy Paris cabled the Department (PARIS 775) to request guidance on how to proceed and asked the Department to inform Sharon Ray and Robert Homme of their legal rights.

¶13. (C) After extensive consultation with the State Department and the Department of Justice, the U.S. Embassy (through DOJ's Office of Foreign Litigation) retained lawyer Georges Kiejman to act on behalf of the U.S. government in the Abdallah case. The Embassy delivered the U.S. statement, as well as Sharon Ray and Robert Homme's statements on March 9, to Kiejman for transmission to the court. Those documents are all on file at DOJ as well as in Embassy Paris, political section.

¶14. (C) On Wednesday, March 7, Assistant Attorney General Waynestein and Deputy Assistant Attorney General Swartz met with France's Chief Counterterrorism judge, Jean-Louis Bruguiere, and the Director of the Ministry of Justice's criminal division, Jean-Marie Huet. They reinforced our message about Abdallah with both of their interlocutors.

¶15. (C) On March 9, Ambassador Stapleton sent a letter to Pascal Clement, the Minister of Justice, to make him aware of the U.S., interest in the case, and ask that the MOJ give the matter appropriate attention. Copies of the Ambassador's letter were also sent to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Dousté-Blazy) and Interior (Sarkozy). The letter in paragraph 2 is a response to this letter.

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